

Supply

The unemployment rate that we have heard so much about today and the figure that has been quoted has been the national figure. The figure in my riding is 18.5 per cent. That is unacceptable in this day and age. With that, I just want to mention some of the possible solutions that we could have and some of the things that are going on in the riding that are very positive. I want to mention a group of individuals who have got together and developed what they call an economic conference. The Nepisiguit economic conference was just held over a week ago after a two-year planning stage. They have developed through self-analysis a strategy to be implemented for that region to help put the region back on track.

[*Translation*]

I would like to use this opportunity to congratulate Ian Oliver and Gérald Mallais, co-chairmen of that conference on the economy in Nepisiguit. I would also like to congratulate the co-ordinator, Georges Marcoux, and his team for having organized this conference.

[*English*]

I should also say there is another group busy at work in another part of the riding with another economic conference. They also have co-presidents, Madam Luminas Senecal of Campbellton and the mayor of Dalhousie, Sandy MacLean, who are going to co-chair that economic conference. I wish them well.

There is a group of individuals that realizes there is a problem in the region and is ready to try to find a solution through self-analysis.

I want to mention specifically that I honestly believe there has to be a federal presence, not only in my riding but in every riding across Canada. I honestly believe that federal expenditure should be used as a tool for regional development. I also think we have to start developing programs and an attitude in government circles that will allow new positions to be developed in departments where there are new programs set up and where it requires new people to be hired. Those positions should be placed in areas of high unemployment, a decentralization of sort so to speak.

I would suspect that in Restigouche—Chaleur we should be looking at 200 new federal positions to help stimulate the economy and give some confidence back to the area. It would send a message to the entrepreneurs

that want to invest in that area that the federal government is there and is ready to help out.

I would also like to mention in closing that we have heard a lot of solutions today. Some of them have been very good ones. I want to echo the comments of the hon. member for Willowdale who talked about municipal infrastructure. I believe quite strongly that it is a very useful and reasonable tool. The other area is new homes, reducing the down payment to 5 per cent and allowing people to use RRSP money to invest in those new homes.

In conclusion, when we look at the economy and the motion today we should just ask ourselves if we are actually better off now than we were in 1984. I guess the answer for my constituents is a plain no. I rest my case.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I will just ask a very short question of my colleague for Restigouche—Chaleur.

I remember visiting New Brunswick about a year and a half ago. One of the things that I noticed when I was there was the tremendous tourism potential in the province of New Brunswick. We all know that tourism is probably one of the largest job creators in this country. I wonder if the hon. member could maybe take a minute or two and speak to the people of Canada—this is a national forum we are debating in today—about some of the tourism ideas and the potential that I know exist in his province.

Mr. Arseneault: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Broadview—Greenwood for his question. I would like to say from the outset that in New Brunswick, like everywhere across Canada, Canadians are very proud people. They are not looking for handouts. There is a misconception out there that when we talk about hard times and unemployment the people just want to stick their hands out and say: "Give us some money and we will go away. We will be quiet about it".

• (1740)

What I am hearing out there and what I see with individuals coming into the office to talk to me is that they are all looking for work. They want to work. They want to be put to work.

It is the responsibility of the federal government to put people back to work, to develop programs. If they cannot develop programs, they should not be the government. It is as simple as that. It was this government that promised jobs, jobs, jobs. We do not have jobs, jobs, jobs. We have